

Feb. 3, 2003

Local Boundary Commission
550 W. Seventh Ave.
Suite 1770
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Sirs,

I would like to add my testimony in regards to the Unorganized Borough Review. I am against an organized borough on Prince of Wales Island.

Concerning the economic capacity of the region, I don't believe that the communities on the island can support a borough government at present. Logging is virtually non-existent here except for sales on tax exempt private lands. Ketchikan Pulp Co. pulled out of Thorne Bay after the 2000 census and when they closed the sort yard in 2001 the population of this town dropped below 300, about half of what your report shows. I believe your income and housing statistics are also high and so do many of the folks I talk too.

You could count the commercial fishermen from Thorne Bay that earn their living from fishing on one hand. There are a few divers that fish sea cucumbers but I don't think they make the bulk of their income from diving.

All of the support or service industries in Thorne Bay have also cut way back or gone under mostly due to the logging shut down.

There really isn't much private individual property ownership on Prince of Wales Island, the bulk of the land is U.S. Forest Service, State Mental Health, University of Alaska, or Native lands which aren't taxable.

The population must be large and stable enough to support a borough government. As I mentioned above I think the population figures are not what your statistics show at least not for Thorne Bay, and I am sure that would be the same for Naukati and Coffman Cove. I do think that the folks who are still here will remain.

I believe that the individual communities are bound together but I don't think that the island as a whole is particularly socially or culturally "together", especially when you consider how isolated some of the communities really are, for example; Point Baker, Port Protection and Port Alexander, (not even close). I also feel that there is some cultural distance between the Native communities and the other communities on the island.

A borough government would not serve the public interest. I am opposed to another tier of bureaucracy for no good or practical reason. The communities seem to be doing fine here with their local / city governments and I feel that it would put a hardship on an area that has been dealt a couple of stiff economic blows already in the last few years. If the State

of Alaska wants more of our monies to support our schools then I suggest they try another approach, forming a borough is not the answer.

I appreciate this opportunity to present my views to the Board.

Thank you -

Sincerely,

Carlton W. Thorpe Jr.

Carlton W. Thorpe Jr.
PO Box 19178
Thorne Bay, AK 99919